

REALISTIC ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENT MEDIA IN THE ARAB REGION (MEDIA AND ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIETY)

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ABSTRACT

This study was based on tracking the reality of the media development in the Arab region by measuring the effects of the media on society, the environment and the issues that focus on addressing them. It has been found that the Arab media needs a lot of support in the field of environmental coverage, where the Arab environment has witnessed in recent years many negative environmental phenomena, such as desertification, air pollution, the spread of waste, random landfills and the use of various types of military ammunition and some of the types of internationally banned weapons, as happened in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya and Palestine as well as the low environmental awareness among the population, which requires the need to direct the focus of Arab media on environmental issues and create a public opinion capable of meeting and facing the challenges of environmental degradation in order to preserve an environment free of pollution and access sustainable development, which is based on a healthy environment. The study concluded that the Arab media needs to go a long way in the work of environmental media, in order to create development and environmental awareness among the Arab public and governments for the subject.

KEYWORDS: *Media, Environmental Media, Development Media, Sustainable Development, Environment, Environmental Society & Arab Society*

Received: Oct 06, 2019; **Accepted:** Oct 26, 2019; **Published:** Dec 28, 2019; **Paper Id.:** IJCMSFEB20202

INTRODUCTION

The media has a great responsibility in identifying the right environmental values and behaviors and thereby spreading the environmental culture, and has the ability to influence positive environmental trends by giving environmental priority to media programs and providing information on the state of the environment, enabling the public and those interested in the environment to participate more effectively and show the effects of environmental damage and leave it aside.

There is no doubt that the effective use of the media is necessary for any society that seeks to preserve and protect the ecosystem by seeking to raise environmental issues, cover up problems and violations and warn of the dangers of harming the environment, but also provide pressure groups and supportive public opinion through coverage. Positive for environmental issues in the Arab region, not only this, but also seeking solutions to them, or limiting the continuation of actions or actions and encroachments on the environment, and this has to do with the interests of the people and the interests of the country, the whole society and the world as a whole.

This coverage aims to provide information and news and mobilize public opinion with or against a particular issue in order to stop the environmental destruction that occurs at the level of individuals, industries and governments by communicating information and raising environmental issues to the public to form a public opinion that is pressing its direction.

The media occupies an important place in any society because of its active role in shaping and activating different aspects of life, linking channels of communication between individuals, people and nations in general and serving the environment and paying special attention to it in all categories of society.

Environmental media in some Arab countries, such as the UAE and Qatar are central to environmental policy as an Arab model, where environmental media plays a role in shaping the environmental awareness of citizens and creating a solid foundation to support measures to protect the environment, providing people with environmental information as a tool to shape attitudes towards environmental issues and rationalize environmental behavior. Because the environmental problems are related to human behavior and the interaction of individuals with their environment, environmental communication in all forms is an important means of improving the quality of the environment as an effective mechanism for creating and creating environmental awareness and achieving a comprehensive environmental culture (Hmedosh, Safeya 2018).

The media is one of the most important means in determining environmental priorities and motivating the public to contribute to decisions and push for policies aimed at pursuing sustainable development and forming a pressure force to deal with environmental problems and find solutions to them.

Unfortunately, Arab governments have not paid much attention to the environment, which has had a negative impact on media coverage, which in turn has given the policy the bulk of its media coverage of environmental issues, resulting in its neglect for long periods of time. Because of security concerns, wars and terrorism continue to occupy the highest place in media coverage. The last decade has seen a significant change in raising of environmental problems and the importance of maintaining a healthy environment through the allocation of documentary programs, channels and websites interested in raising environmental issues, which enhances environmental awareness among the Arab public and linking the impact of this awareness on the media system and its role in ensuring dealing with environmental issues and linking them to the cultural, social and economic roles and functions attached to the Arab environmental concern, and the study adopted the treatment of the problem on the Imperial introspective approach of in the analysis.

The study discussed three main themes.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARAB MEDIA AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY

Since the 1970s, the need to protect the environment has progressively become one of the most pressing policy issues in the international agenda. Yet, at the same time, newly independent and other developing states have struggled to ensure that environmental regulation does not impose a straitjacket on their ability to pursue developmental policies as they see fit (Pierre-Marie Dupuy, Jorge E. Viñuales, 2019).

Arab media organizations, unlike many international media outlets, which continue to deal with environmental problems, do not allocate more than one topic or a weekly page for the same in newspapers as well as visual, audio and electronic media – in addition to the fact that most of the journalists in this field lack specialization and inherent knowledge of all the complex issues and vocabulary in this field.

It is noteworthy that most of what is published in the Arab media is focused on the transmission of positive initiatives, serious calls, warm calls, domestic and international laws issued here and there for the protection of the environment and biodiversity as well as fragmented coverage of conferences, seminars and workshops that release

recommendations, advice and guidance. This concern is then absent from the media as soon as the conference is closed and Halima returns to her old habit.

Many politicians, especially in societies dominated by dictatorial regimes, consider the environment to be a social luxury because in their view, it occupies the broadest part of the priorities and interests of the Arab citizen, who seeks to earn his living and provide a job opportunity for him and his children.

This view is not entirely true because the environment is one of the components of society in its economic, cultural, tourism and health aspect. Humans are developing rapidly and the environment has existed for thousands of years, but human is the one who works to destroy it and abuse it unconsciously most of the time, which has an impact and will affect the future generations if the plans and the solutions are not now developed for the future. However, one of the major environmental problems is global warming, which is a global problem that requires an organized global effort in which all countries participate to develop strategies to reduce this phenomenon, and the media is one of its tools. Environmental media contribute significantly to environmental conservation by spreading these issues and putting pressure on decision makers to take actions and decisions that oblige citizens, business owners, factories and companies to preserve the environment.

Environmental media is a new specialty in the field of media in the Arab world, where it began to appear in the early 1970s and the term itself is the terms of two complex concepts: media and the environment. The media is the objective and honest translation of news and facts and provide it to the public in the way they help them to form a sound opinion on many issues, while the environment is the medium in which man lives and contains land, water and air, all of which fundamentally affect his life, and media is one of the key elements in the preservation of the environment, where environmental awareness is created and acquired and transported. The public's own willingness to interact with them in awareness to spread new values to protect the environment or call for the abandonment of harmful behaviors. (Najah, 2009).

Development media is also a specialized media outlet and aims to accelerate the transformation of society from poverty into a dynamic state of economic, social and political growth, through various means of communication, based on good planning and coordination as well as the education processes, skills acquisition, the desire to update and find strategies and resources available for development through successful communication messages. Promoting the theme of environmental protection, became a necessity imposed by the developments of the present era. By paying attention to the new communication media in increasing the transmission of the environmental message to a society that is aware of environmental issues and the need to protect them (Othman, Nasreddeen, 2017).

The prerequisite for achieving all this is the existence of well-informed media on the various branches of knowledge. The media recognizes that knowledge is limitless, taking into account the nature of Arab societies with a conservative culture that requires special treatments that take into account this specificity. (Arab Democratic Center, 2018).

The lack of extensive media coverage in order to create sustainable environmental development raises many questions that need convincing answers such as:

Is there a strategy for environmental media in the Arab world? Do Arab countries have media cadres specializing in environmental media? In order to meet the challenge and to face many environmental problems that are getting worse

and spreading day by day, from water scarcity, limited land, desertification, increased fossil pollution, marine and coastal degradation, not to mention oil spills, radioactive pollution, global warming, etc.

The answer is simply no because of the factors mentioned above, which summarize that the priorities of media coverage focus on the political concerns of the Arab citizen.

Talking about environmental media leads us to talk about the problems faced by this type of media in the Arab world. The most important problem is the lack of information for the public and the media at the same time, which makes it difficult or impossible to make progress in creating sustainable development that preserves the environment.

So that, we cannot talk about environmental awareness, environmental information and environmental education in the absence of a big data bank and mechanisms for storing, providing and disseminating information in this area. We are in the digital age and the internet age. It is primarily about providing data and information in case we want to influence public opinion and to influence future perception and behavior (Carat, 2013).

In addition, the social media plays a role in spreading environmental culture and raising awareness about environmental issues and problems, as well as the role played by news media, news websites and blogs in achieving the goals of environmental media and delivering its message to the Arab public. In order to create a state of alert, reduce infringements and to create deterrent, protective and regulated legislation for environmental affairs.

Despite that the Arab world has entered the internet age late. In recent years, the number of Internet users in the Arab world has increasingly grown, and Arabic has become the fourth most widely used language on the Internet after English, Chinese and Spanish. The number of users of this language has increasingly doubled according to a report prepared by the "Environment and Development" magazine issued by the Arab Forum for Environment and Development, which examines the websites of the ministries of environment in the Arab countries.

According to the report, it is estimated that the proportion of Internet users in the Arab world was about 37% in 2015, exceeding 90% in some Gulf countries.

With this significant development in the use of the Internet and the increasing spread of Arabic-language websites, Arab environmental sites have had a significant share in this technological revolution. Environmental information sources no longer rely solely on materials available in English. This allowed large groups to access this information, as language was a barrier to accessing information (Hashem, 2019).

THE INFLUENTIAL FACTORS ADDRESSING THE MEDIA TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

It means a combination of factors that influence the media in the way it deals with environmental issues that result in a particular approach to these issues. They may not necessarily be in agreement with the required role of the media in this area, and these factors include:

Political Factors: where it plays an important role in media coverage. It depends on the extent to which governments, NGOs, parties and organizations adopt these issues. It is natural that the degree of attention to these issues varies from one society/country to another. The media specialized in the environment in the Arab world is still at a lower level of environmental risks facing the Arab region as well as the whole world. Media professionals, whether individuals,

institutions or states, have not yet made a decision to enter this field in a specialized and professional manner, especially since the risks of war, political differences and social problems are no less important (Darwish Mustafa Al-Shafei, 2019).

The difference in views between the major industrialized countries and third world countries in dealing with the environmental problems they face, while the issue of burying toxic and nuclear chemical waste in the territories of third world countries is the most important issue for third world countries, reducing the rate of air pollution by CO_2 . Carbon is the first issue for major industrialized countries.

Economic Factors: The economic factor has emerged as a prominent and influential factor in addressing environmental issues. Developing countries have seen that the problems on the table concern industrialized countries in the first place and that they are not a priority for countries whose manufacturing programs are still in the early stages.

Media Parameters: The media parameters refer to the combination of factors related to the institutional construction of the media and the nature of its work and the level of technology, beside the level of media workers, in terms of professionalism and the extent to which they are familiar with environmental issues. The use of the media to convince those involved in environmental issues requires the following:

- To determine the objective of the media process, to face the environmental pollution such as faulty industrial drainage.
- Identify the target audience as a first step to determine the appropriate means for each sector, as well as the appropriate message for it.
- Link the media message with positive incentives while providing positive models of environmental behavior and giving the public specific instructions on how to deal properly with the environment.

THE ROLE OF ENVIRONMENTAL MEDIA IN THE ARAB COUNTRIES

There have been several studies that have focused on the role of the media in spreading environmental awareness and raising awareness of environmental protection laws, and most of the studies conducted agree on the importance of mass media, and their main role in attracting public attention to these issues, and any government or academic efforts cannot succeed, if not supported by a media effort. The environmental media is pushing the public to get involved in the process of planning and making decisions, and that the participation of the public in the environmental dialogue leads to the generalization of environmental awareness to preserve the natural fields, and give officials a clear picture of the interests of public opinion (Othman, Nasr Eddine, 2017).

The media can play their part in developing and disseminating environmental awareness according to their own potential

- TV channels: It is uniquely effective in reporting news related to disasters and environmental crises, where it can provide its audience with objective and transparent coverage of environmental problems and disasters, based on sound and live image that makes it more realistic and increases the power of its impact. This comes in the form of documentaries, talk shows and news bulletins, which include numerous reports highlighting the environment as well as investigations that reveal various irregularities and abuses against the environment. Audiovisual media are the best and most authentic media methods. Researchers and critics point out that television reaches the height of media efficiency when covering important events, such as disasters and crises if they occur in an immediate

way that exceeds the limits of time and space, thus helping to build cognitive images, and positively affect the trends of public opinion, elites and the **decision makers**.

- **Audio media:** The most important is radio, which is the most widespread and widely used audio media for reporting on disasters and crises, and is considered the least expensive. It addresses the general public at all levels of education and culture, relying on hearing in the delivery of information, facts, news and disaster data. It also has a strong impact on the formation of mental images. Experiments have shown that simple and easy radio materials are easier to remember than if they were presented in print, especially among less intelligent or less educated individuals, and in the following we will review some of the radio methods that contribute to environmental awareness:
 - News coverage that comes in the form of news and broadcasts, which are provided by the radio stations in their daily broadcasts, especially if we talk about local radio stations that allocate more space for local environmental issues
 - Radio programs that are presented to listeners in the form of dialogue on a round table based on discussing environmental issues with specialists and environmentalists, and with the participation of citizens in all aspects of the topic.
 - Broadcast reports, investigations and social advertising aimed at creating environmental awareness, which helps to create public opinion.
 - Environmental-related radio advertisements that can be shown on radio waves, which aim to influence the behavior of listeners positively and encourage them to participate in the creation of environmental awareness.
 - Republishing environmental news promotes actual environmental awareness, especially reports, so that the environmental message takes root in the minds of listeners, provided that they are accompanied by live testimonies.

Radio services are considered an important pillar of environmental awareness in the developed countries, and radio is the most effective means of addressing environmental issues, especially at local levels.

- **Newspaper:** Despite the real threat faced by the written press due to new and electronic media, it still occupies an important place among other media, especially its websites; the newspaper is an easy and convenient way at the same time. The journalistic art and the diversity of news, comments and opinions of specialists and the public as well as cartoons and pictures give the press an active role in environmental awareness as well as the role of scientific journals in spreading environmental awareness, which was confirmed by a number of studies that addressed the role of the media in environmental awareness. The significant increase in scientific journals with an environmental dimension that appeared in the United States of America was a reflection of the trends of citizens' opinions and desires to pursue environmental issues, and their awareness of the dangers of environmental pollution, the issue of pollution has become one of their main concerns.
- **Personal Communication:** Personal communication is one of the most influential forms of communication and most capable of convincing the receiving audience. Personal communication is characterized by the ability to

recognize the recipient's echo of the communication message, and to direct the connection on this basis. This helps to make the desired impact if the sender has high communication skills, and has the ability to employ them to convince the public.

- **New Media:** It is one of the secretions of modern information and communication technology, which is carried out mainly from the Internet and includes specialized websites, blogs and web pages. In recent years, what is known as interactive media or social networks has emerged, which plays a major role in mobilizing audiences, forming public opinion, pressing through the spaces, it gives to its patrons, and offering services and benefits to ensure continuity of communication. It is clear that it has become an effective means of raising important issues, including environmental pollution, and is being used for more conscious and mature purposes because of its ease of use, widespread and polarization of large audiences. Environmental issues and problems are one of the main topics raised through social media and mainly Facebook, where many local as well as international associations and organizations have become active through Facebook in order to spread environmental awareness and culture through the comprehensive environmental information and news. They also use Facebook and other social media to advocate for volunteer campaigns to protect the environment. In addition, they include photos, videos and comments on their pages in order to attract users' attention and develop environmental awareness.

HOW TO ACTIVATE PUBLIC CONCERNS ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL MEDIA

The environmental media is important to all groups of society. The consequences of environmental pollution disasters do not differentiate between one group and another. Therefore, the media should turn to the public to form strong and pressing masses to urge decision makers to adopt a parallel development policy that respects the environment and preserve its natural resources. The media should also turn to scientists and intellectuals to urge them to use their creative abilities to maintain the balance of nature and reduce environmental pollution. Also, it should address politicians and decision makers to emphasize that their responsibilities are not limited to a certain group of citizens or in a specific time period, but is a situation characterized by permanence and continuity.

The importance of environmental information to the public comes from the need to create environmental awareness and spread the concept of sustainable development. The significant qualitative shift in the rapid flow of information on the environment and development has helped to raise the awareness of environmental problems. The word "environment" was not known to the media, but it began to occupy the main pillars of the press, and various media agencies began to pay great attention to pollution problems and environmental disasters in the 1970s, such as the 1978 crash of the oil tanker Amokandis. The nuclear reactor accident at Three Mile, Iceland, the 1979 Gulf of Mexico oil well explosion as well as subsequent incidents, such as the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear reactor explosion, and the First, Second and Third Gulf Wars.

Media treatment of environmental issues has been characterized by two main characteristics:

- Focus on the specialized media message, which is addressed to a category of specialized scientists and others, who are concerned with the study of environmental topics in a specialized way.
- Media attention to news media coverage of practical and research activities related to environmental issues, and the dissemination of important events that result in environmental damage.

The purpose of environmental media is to develop and protect environmental capacities in order to achieve a socially and vitally sound functional adaptation of citizens, resulting in the rationalization of environmental behavior in humans dealing with the environment, and the preparation of human beings to participate in projects to protect the environment and preserve environmental resources, the importance of the development of environmental media and its role in early warning and monitoring any environmental imbalances, guiding it to public opinion and increasing environmental awareness among the population, and their contribution to the enactment of positive environmental legislation.

The Aspects and Dimensions of the Press' Role in Supporting the Applying of the Provisions of Criminalization and Penalties Related to the Protection of the Environment

The media, especially the new ones, can be relied upon to play a vital and influential role, which contributes, by this role, to support and assist the competent authorities in enforcing Palestinian laws in order to protect the Palestinian environment and to stop the attack on them, and the most important aspects of that media role can be determined in:

The media should alert the community to the seriousness of attacks on the environment and its serious consequences, whether as a result of deliberate misbehavior or collective and individual negligence. The importance of this commitment is to enable the authorities and concerned environment agencies to carry out their responsibilities, and to take appropriate action to address and resolve these threats, as well as to raise the level of the public responsibility through the intended awareness.

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- Informing the public of all new crimes or violations against the environment, and the responsible and transparent media coverage of all crimes or violations, and follow up the results of investigations and prosecuting the perpetrators, in order to satisfy the desire of the recipients to know what is going on around them or what is happening around them.
- Focus on the dissemination of punishments for environmental offenders and punishing them for their serious crime against society, so that they do not **revert back**, and that will be a lesson to others. The value of the press' assistance appears in achieving the deterrent effect of punishment for crimes of environmental abuse is demonstrated in an effort to reduce their commission.
- Responding to the requirements of awareness and education to develop a sense of responsibility and increase public awareness. To be positively involved in the preservation of the environment. One way to achieve this is that newspapers should take care to provide appropriate amounts of necessary information and simplified explanations of the most important provisions of criminalization and punishment related to the protection of the environment.
- Giving objective facts about environmental problems, publishing research and studies that address the issue of the environment, especially those that suit different cultural levels of recipients with analysis.

- The press practice for its supervisory role and follow up the implementation of laws and regulations and the behavior of the competent authorities as a basis for the success of confronting the issue of environmental damage and providing adequate protection to it.
- Use the realistic constructive criticism tool, so that the press does not lose its credibility and interest in protecting the environment, by identifying shortcomings, or deviation and showing solutions, besides showing achievements and positives and revealing constructive efforts.
- Advising and guiding authorities, administrative and executive agencies in their needs to solve environmental problems and paying intensive attention to the development of environmental protection legislation. The press bears the burden of participating in the adoption of the necessary laws, amendments and necessary assessments to respond to the requirements of progress and development.
- The role of the press media in raising awareness of environmental protection laws and contributing to supporting activities to confront and combat environmental crimes is not complete without examining the possibility of finding some new forms of punishment to be applied to such crimes, and more generally and more comprehensively, the nucleus of a special system or a modern punitive policy in this area that meet the needs of evolution.

NEW MEDIA AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE ARAB WORLD

Today, we live in the era of the new media in all its manifestations and dimensions. A stage in which the various communication tools and applications have moved into the public hands, where it is no longer monopolized by media organizations, especially after the intermarriage of modern communication technology, multimedia and computer, which has resulted in new forms of communication, and building a new content and media messages that flow freely among the user audience. For example, the function of mobile phones is no longer limited to communicating remotely. It has new, more dynamic functions and roles. It is used to send calls for political and human rights demonstrations, or to disseminate information in quick and economical ways.

The digital generation has become dominated by liberal-oriented intellectual choices, believing more than ever before in the principles of individual freedom, freedom of expression, freedom of choice, multiplicity of propositions and no longer tolerates unilateralism and **closed-mindedness**. This, in turn, has positively influenced the nature of the communication environment in many countries, which with the emergence of this new reality, have been forced to adopt proportionally media reforms (Kamal Hamidou. 2018).

So that the media, especially the government media do not remain a shadow of their own. In this new communication and media context generated by new communication technologies, social media has become of paramount importance to the digital generation, as an alternative space for old media. Thanks to the speed of uploading news or images as soon as the event occurs (Kamal Hamidou, 2018).

Environmental issues and problems are one of the topics raised through social media recently in many Arab societies, especially in Lebanon, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Palestine. In the Arab world, there are dozens of websites and pages of environmental associations and organizations active through the website that are used in one way or another to raise the environmental situation and create awareness to meet the challenges of the environment.

The new media has revolutionized the media content by reducing the professionalism required for preparation, as amateurs can prepare that content without the need for the necessary professional complexities in traditional media institutions. New media, especially social media networks, such as Twitter and Facebook, is one of the most important means of awareness-raising with its positive or negative views of our times, especially for young people, who make up the largest proportion of the Internet and new media audience and users. Social networks have become effective tools for change, such as Facebook and Twitter and not just a tool that allows users to post their personal comments and share them with others, many users now have a platform to publish news, videos, photos and their concerns about society and other issues, such as environmental issues, which are now occupying the minds of many Palestinians, who are worried about their present, their future and the future of the next generations, as is the case in many countries of the world.

The volume of useful environmental information for Arabic web surfers is very small, as most of the websites belonging to official, private and civil Arab bodies are in English. It often relies on providing promotional information to the organizations that own the site rather than providing information and research services to the users. It can be said that most Arabic websites concerned with the environment are promotional sites to attract foreign institutions. However, these sites are weak as public relations tools as well because of their lack of information, and it is known that successful public relations are based on enough documented information.

CONCLUSIONS

Arab environmental media faces great challenges, and has important tasks ahead. Firstly, they need a centralized environmental information base, which is at the disposal of information and environmental agencies and institutions. It also needs a specialized and experienced media staff through regular and continuous workshops and training courses to be at the level of responsibility. Environmental media also need to raise the issue clearly and treat the environmental issue in a scientific and systematic way, based on logic, proof, compelling evidence and convincing data. It should also delve deeper into the explanation and interpretation of environmental problems, which they pose and discuss, and should not be limited to narrative, description, excitement and simplified surface coverage.

Arab environmental media also need to coordinate with various environmental organizations and work to integrate activities and tasks to raise environmental awareness with great challenge and responsibility, and the responsibility requires more diligence, work and coordination in the spirit of the 21st century and the logic of the digital age.

RESULTS

- Arab media and the sustainable development tools of the environment are still in their initial phase and need more attention.
- Arab governments do not pay much attention to the environment and do not put the environment within their political programs, so the media does not do what is required.
- Issues of civil wars, security, counter-terrorism and democratic transformations are the main media topics in the Arab world.

- The Arab media lacks cadres and specialists in the field of environment and the management of environmental media production.
- Social media can be relied in promoting environmental issues and raise the level of environmental awareness and sustainable development due to the great use.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher recommends to follow the following policies to succeed and make a qualitative shift in the work of environmental media and media, which contributes to the advancement and promotion of environmental culture, and to make positive ideas in the reality of environmental awareness by official environmental and media bodies:

- The continued support and encouragement from environmental departments to the media and journalists, and to motivate them to innovate in environmental exhibition. Providing environmental databases and information sources, and the appointment of a responsible body, who has the ability to deliver the good environmental information supported by numbers and data.
- Raise the awareness between the managers and the employees of the media organization about the important role of these organizations in consolidating the values of the province and contributing to the continuity of sustainable development in the country.
- The advanced media planning to achieve the desired objectives of the media to raise the environmental issues.
- Provide the community at all levels with the opportunity to take responsibility by participating in the presentation of their environmental views through media channels as an innovative and interactive way to spread environmental awareness and education.

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